

be decided by the decertifying official, either the State Conservationist or Chief, as applicable, based upon their weighing of all relevant facts and the seriousness of the reasons for decertification, mitigating factors, if any, and the following general guidelines:

(a) For failures in the provision of technical service for which there are no mitigating factors, *e.g.*, no remedial action by the technical service provider, a maximum period of three years decertification;

(b) For repeated failures in the provision of technical assistance for which there are mitigating factors, *e.g.*, the technical service provider has taken remedial action to the satisfaction of NRCS, a maximum period of one to two years decertification; and

(c) For a violation of certification agreement terms, *e.g.*, failure to possess technical competency for a listed practice, a period of one year or less, if the technical service provider can master such competency within a year period.

§ 652.38 Scope of decertification.

(a) When the technical service provider is a private sector entity or public agency, the decertifying official may decertify the entire organization, including all the individuals identified as authorized to provide technical services under the auspices of such organization. The decertifying official may also limit the scope of decertification, for example, to one or more specifically named individuals identified as authorized to provide technical services under the organization's auspices or to an organizational element of such private sector entity or public agency. The scope of decertification will be set forth in the decertification determination and will be based upon the facts of each decertification action, including whether actions of particular individuals can be imputed to the larger organization.

(b) In cases where specific individuals are decertified only, an entity or public agency must promptly file an amended Certification Agreement removing the decertified individual(s) from the Certification Agreement. In addition, the entity or public agency must demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the State Conservationist, that the entity

or public agency has taken affirmative steps to ensure that the circumstances resulting in decertification have been addressed.

§ 652.39 Mitigating factors.

In considering whether to decertify, the period of decertification, and scope of decertification, the deciding official will take into consideration any mitigating factors. Examples of mitigating factors include, but are not limited to the following:

(a) The technical service provider worked, in a timely manner, to correct any deficiencies in the provision of technical service;

(b) The technical service provider took the initiative to bring any deficiency in the provision of their technical services to the attention of NRCS and sought NRCS advice to remediate the situation; and

(c) The technical service provider took affirmative steps to prevent any failures in the provision of technical services from occurring in the future.

§ 652.40 Effect of decertification.

(a) The Department will not make payment under a program contract for the technical services of a decertified technical service provider that were provided during the period of decertification. Likewise, NRCS will not procure the services of a decertified technical service provider during the period of decertification.

(b) *National decertification list.* NRCS will maintain a list of decertified technical service providers. NRCS will remove decertified providers from the list of certified providers. Program participants must not knowingly hire a decertified technical service provider. It is the program participant's responsibility to check the decertified list before hiring a technical service provider. Decertification of a technical service provider in one State decertifies the technical service provider from providing technical services under current programs in all States, the Caribbean Area, and the Pacific Basin Area.

§ 652.41 Effect of filing deadlines.

A technical service provider's failure to meet the filing deadlines under this subpart will result in the forfeiture of